



Press Packet

EXHIBITION: “5 ‘til 12”

LOCATION: Beall Center for Art and Technology

EXHIBITION DATES: January 18, 2006 – March 15, 2006

PRESS BRIEFING: January 17th 10 a.m. -12 p.m.

OPENING RECEPTION: Tuesday, January 17, 2006 6-9pm at the Beall Center

ADDRESS:

University of California, Irvine
712 Arts Plaza, Claire Trevor School of the Arts
Irvine, CA 92697-2775

HOURS:

Tuesday – Wednesday, 12:00-5:00 p.m.
Thursday – Saturday, 12:00-8:00 p.m.
No admission charge.

CONTACT INFO:

(949) 824-4339
<http://beallcenter.uci.edu>

DESCRIPTION:

"5 'til 12 is an immersive narrative installation that explores the fragile human ego using evolutionary algorithms and game-theory. Through user identification technology, interactive video-based characters with complex personalities develop in direct response to audience participation over the 2- month duration of the exhibition."

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS:

Knifeandfork: a collaboration between artists Sue Huang and Brian House

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

From the printing press, through film and television, to the internet--new technologies continue to transform the way humans tell stories. Now RFID (radio frequency identification technology), most commonly used to track merchandise, is being applied in the service of storytelling. In the Beall Center's Winter 2006 Exhibition, "5 'til 12" artists Sue Huang and Brian House combine radio frequency identification and artificial intelligence technologies to craft a new twist on the narrative form.

"5 'til 12" was selected by the Beall Center's Curatorial Advisory Council (composed of artists, technologists and museum directors) from a field of 45 international submissions for exhibition. The council members agreed that "5 'til 12" pushed the boundaries of non-linear narrative and free exploration of plot in a way that was both interesting and important.

The Beall Center for Art and Technology has produced six exhibitions and performances exploring new technologies' applications to narrative form: "Microepiphanies," a digital opera in 2001; "Reading Frankenstein," an immersive theater performance in 2002; "The Roman Forum Project," a merger of classical Greek theatrical traditions and

Internet technologies in 2003; and "Mapping the Unfindable," a retrospective of Norman Klein's experimental literary media works in 2004. "5 'til 12" continues the Beall Center's role in exploring the impact of technology on art and culture.

ARTISTS' STATEMENT:

The Beall Center becomes the site of a nonlinear narrative with Knifeandfork's immersive installation, "5 'til 12". The visitor is invited to watch four characters, on four monitors, as they recount the tragic circumstances of the exhibition's opening night. The experience is unique for each visitor, as each story has most likely never been heard before... and won't ever be heard again.

The premise is derived from Akira Kurosawa's film "Rashomon", in which four eyewitness accounts of a murder are presented to the viewer, who serves the role of a magistrate. The contradicting stories reveal that objectivity is elusive, as each individual cannot help but infuse his story, consciously or not, with personal shame and ambition. It is unclear who is lying, or if it matters. Each story holds a valid reality of its own, a subjective truth that reinforces a desired identity. However, perhaps there could be another layer: in addition to stories that differ between tellers, might an individual's story change with each new telling? "5 'til 12" proposes that we evolve multiple narratives as we explore multiple identities.

The process is inspired by the Oulipo literary movement, in particular the canonical piece by Raymond Queneau, "One Hundred Thousand Billion Sonnets," in which 'potential' literature emerges when lines of words are spliced and recombined. "5 'til 12" draws from the artists' own journals, fantasies, and parodies, all of which are algorithmically assembled to create an enormous number of potential personas for each character.

Stories are selected from the possibilities in rounds, using a programmatic variation on the "Prisoner's Dilemma", a model from game theory where individuals choose to cooperate or not in order to maximize their own personal advantage. Seeking to portray themselves in the best possible light, the characters must choose to be complimentary, neutral, or vindictive toward each other. A character that appears confident and blameless while illustrating everyone else's faults will 'score' the highest. However, in the following round, he or she can expect revenge and must eventually make amends. The strategy of each character is adapted using an evolutionary algorithm according to its effectiveness in each round.

The installation uses RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) cards to identify individual visitors. When each new visitor swipes a card, a new story is selected, and the visitor is recognized as he or she explores the narrative space.

"In the last few minutes of the final hour, anything is possible."

Credits:

Concept, engineering, writing, and production

Brian House

Sue Huang

Audio-visual content and editing:

David Feinberg

Performances:

Amy Finkel

Brian House

Sue Huang

Nathan Phillips

Additional writing:

Amy Finkel

Nathan Phillips

Joe Schiappa

PRESS CONTACTS IN AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION:

Eleanore Stewart, Director

The Beall Center

(949) 824-8945

ADDITIONAL ARTIST NOTES:

Brian House works as an artist and programmer in Brooklyn, and contributes his skills in “dance-driven sound,” algorithmic performances, database imaginaries, and location-embedded narratives to assist in his production of “**5 ‘til 12.**” He is also completing a thesis in art and technology at Chalmers University in Goteborg, Sweden. **Sue Huang**, born in Saudi Arabia, currently lives in Los Angeles and practices media arts as a part of the UCLA Design – Media Arts Program. She is a graduate of Georgetown University and Phillips Exeter Academy, and has joined previous programs Chalmers University and Waseda University (Japan).

For additional resources and information:

<http://knifeandfork.org>

sue@knifeandfork.org

brian@knifeandfork.org

“5 ‘til 12” image:

http://beallcenter.uci.edu/exhibitions/images/5_til_12_image.jpg

“5 ‘til 12” trailer:

http://knifeandfork.org/5t12/5til12_trailer_sm.mov